



Saguaro National Park News Release

For Immediate Release

November 20, 2007

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December Programs Offered at Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park is offering a series of programs this winter that will explore the wonderful natural and cultural history of the park. Many of these programs will also celebrate the park's 75th anniversary, coming up on March 1, 2008. Join naturalists for an evening walk in the park, or join a local expert for a presentation in the visitor center. Programs will be offered at both districts. There is no charge for interpretive programs, but park entrance fees apply.

Special Programs offered at the Rincon Mountain District (Saguaro East) include:

December 1 11:00 a.m. Desert Cats and Dogs

Join youth naturalist Eric Forrest on the visitor center patio for a look at the variety of "cats and dogs" that call Saguaro National Park home

December 2 10:00 a.m. "1933 to Today: Saguaro National Park"

Take an easy, 1 mile walk back in time to learn how and why Saguaro National Park was created. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water. Advance registration is recommended and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on December 9 and 30.***

December 4 8:30 a.m. Desert Bird Walk

Bring your binoculars and join the quest for desert birds. This easy two-hour, 1 mile walk will introduce you to some of the birds that call Saguaro National Park home. Reserve a space on this walk by calling the visitor center at 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on December 11, and 18.***

December 4 9:00 a.m. Desert Morning Hike

Join a park naturalist for this three-hour, 4 mile exploration of Saguaro National Park. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and bring water and a trail snack. Advance registration is recommended and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on December 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 and 26.***

December 6 10:00 a.m. Prehistoric People in the Sonoran Desert

Join Volunteer Walter Coe on the visitor center patio for an exploration into the prehistory of this area. Learn who lived here over a thousand years ago and what they used for food, clothing and shelter. ***This program will also be offered on December 13 and 20.***

December 7 11:00 a.m. "Little House on the Desert"

Join "Viola Freeman" on a 1 mile, two-hour walk and find out what life was like here 75 years ago. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water. Advance registration is recommended and can be made by calling 733-5153.

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December 7 7:00 p.m. 75th Anniversary Night Walk

This year Saguaro National Park celebrates its 75th Birthday. To celebrate, the park is offering a special series of programs highlighting important park themes. Join Park Ranger Josh Boles for this 1½ -hour hike through the Sonoran Desert at night and discover how important dark nights are to the park's many plants and animals. Bring water and a flashlight. Space is limited, so call the visitor center at 733-5153 to reserve your spot. ***This program will also be offered on December 21.***

December 8 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. Buffelgrass Weed Pull in the Rincon Mountains

Volunteers are being sought to work with Park staff to remove a patch of buffelgrass, an invasive non-native plant which threatens the Sonoran Desert. We will be meeting at the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center and then carpool to the Javelina Picnic Area work site. Please park in the Administrative Parking Lot (1st right turn after entering the park, just south of visitor center parking lot). Wear sturdy hiking shoes, long pants and a hat. Bring water and gloves (if you have them); tools and gloves will be provided. The main event will be followed by a "potluck picnic," so feel free to bring goodies to share. Please RSVP by calling 733-5187, or sign up at the visitor center so we can get a general head count. We look forward to seeing you there!

December 11 7:00 p.m. Star Party

Join park naturalists for an introduction to astronomy and a look at the desert night sky. Telescopes and binoculars will be available. Advance registration is required and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5153.

December 15 3:00 p.m. "75 Years at Saguaro National Park: An Illustrated History"

Join Park Ranger Laura Bolyard in the visitor center auditorium for a trip down memory lane as Saguaro National Park prepares to celebrate its 75th anniversary. This presentation, which includes many historic photos, takes a look at the events that helped shape Saguaro National Park. Reservations are recommended and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5153.

December 18 7:00 p.m. "Global Climate, Saguaros, and Public Policy"

Global Climate Change is one of the most important topics facing the world's scientists and politicians. Join Park Ranger Josh Boles for this one-hour program that will attempt to strip down the rhetoric and seek out the truth about climate change, its potential impact on Saguaro National Park, and what can be done to reduce its impacts. This program will take place in the visitor center auditorium. Advanced registration is recommended and can be made by calling 733-5153.

December 29 6:00 p.m. Holiday Car Caravan

Explore the natural lore of the solstice holiday on a unique nighttime drive through Saguaro National Park. Auto tours will be offered at 6:00, 6:30, 7:00 and 7:30 p.m., and will feature several stops along the 8-mile Cactus Forest Drive. Each tour will last approximately 1½ hours. Cookies and cider will be offered at the visitor center all evening. Space is limited, so call the visitor center at 733-5153 to reserve your spot.

Special Programs offered at the Tucson Mountain District (Saguaro West) include:

December 1 7:30 a.m. Bird Walk

Join birding guide John Higgins on an early morning walk to see some of the twenty-five species of birds that are year-round residents of Saguaro National Park. Meet at the Red Hills Visitor Center. The group will caravan to several nearby locations. The walking is considered easy, on flat but dirt and rocky trails. Persons of all ages, with or without bird watching experience, are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring water and sun protection, along with binoculars and bird guides if you have them. The walk usually lasts 2 hours. For more information call 733-5158.

December 1 3:30 p.m. Twilight Hike

These hikes are 2 to 2½ miles and 2 to 2½ hours in length. They are scheduled to begin approximately one hour before sunset. The terrain is sandy, with some rock outcroppings. Some of these can be skirted, but some must be climbed. We will return to the parking area in the fading light after sunset on an alternate trail or along a rocky old mining road. As space is limited, advance registration is required and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5158. ***This program will also be offered on December 15 and 29.***

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

December 8 3:00 p.m. “Energy for the Future”

When gasoline reached \$3.00 per gallon, it called attention to our dependence on Mideast oil and our lack of investment in alternative energy sources. In the past 30 years no nuclear generators or crude oil refineries have been built in the United States, and now there are no quick and easy solutions. Our energy demand is destined to go up in the future, and we have to face the situation now. Join Arnold Bartz who retired from a 36-year career with Dow Chemical Company and has taught a course in “Science and Technology in Society” at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio to explore this growing problem.

December 21 3:00 p.m. Sunset Hike

This hike climbs 700 feet to a ridgeline for the sunset, and descends the trail solely under the light of the moon. The hike takes 3½ to 4 hours, and is 3½ miles in length. Reservations are required, and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5158.

December 22 4:00 p.m. “Moon Take Night Make Day” Hike

This gentle, relatively flat 2½ mile hike travels up a desert wash during the transition from day to night. The hike takes approximately 3 hours. Reservations are required and can be made by calling the visitor center at 733-5158.

Visitor Center Locations/Phone Numbers

Red Hills Visitor Center (Saguaro WEST)
2700 North Kinney Road
Tucson, AZ 85743

(520) 733-5158

Rincon Mountain Visitor Center (Saguaro EAST)
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730

(520) 733-5153

For more information about Saguaro National Park and some of its partners, Friends of Saguaro National Park and the Western National Parks Association, visit these websites:

www.nps.gov/sagu.
www.friendsofsaguaro.org
www.wnpa.org